Foremost retailer here for event

WAL-MART OPENING — A crowd of employees, management, corporate officials, chamber and city officials were on hand for ribbon cutting ceremonies this morning (Tuesday) signifying the "re-opening" of the Nacogdoches Wal-Mart Store, following its remodeling and expansion. Cutting the ribbon were (front, center) store manager Don Coleman and his wife Sherry. A special guest in town for the event was Sam Walton, (shown at far right, holding up one finger) owner of Wal-Mart Stores. (Staff photo by Hardy Meredith)

Wal-Mart in observance

By CANDACE VELVIN
Sentinel Staff

America's foremost retailer, Sam Walton, colorful billionaire owner of Wal-Mart Stores, visited Nacogdoches this morning (Tuesday) for ceremonies re-opening the newly-remodeled and expanded Nacogdoches Wal-Mart Store.

With the addition of 15,000 square feet, the local Wal-Mart now encompasses 77,000 square feet of retail merchandise. The company's largest proto-type store is approximately 81,000 square feet.

Mr. Walton and the host of Wal-Mart regional and district officials on hand for the opening praised the work of local employees and management in completing the major expansion and in cleaning and restocking the store in time for this morning's ceremonies.

In praising the local employees, Mr. Walton said "you have obviously won the hearts of the shoppers here. We have a great company and you have made it great." Don Coleman, local manager, noted the local store's overall sales were up 16.5 percent and that in the month of November, the store had a 22 percent increase in sales.

Special recognition was given to two employees, Willie Stigall and Alma Shattenberg, who have been with the Nacogdoches store since its opening in February of 1977.

Mr. Walton introduced the company's regional vice president, Lew Skelton, and noted the region, which includes Texas and several neighboring states, had 1986 income of $800 million.

The company's store planning and opening team, which worked with the local store in its expansion and re-opening, was also introduced. The company had more than 140 projects in 1987, including new stores, expansions, remodelings, "facelifts," and re-locations of existing stores. Mr. Walton announced that 126 new Wal-Mart stores, 20 Sam's Wholesale Clubs and 50 remodelings and expansions are planned for 1987.

In explaining Wal-Mart's "store within a store" concept, Mr. Walton introduced the local store's department managers, who are called store managers. Each manager displayed a product from their department, gave the retail price and told Mr. Walton how many of the items had been sold in the past few weeks. Each manager also gave the percentage of the store's total sales their department was responsible for.

Mr. Walton explained to civic and chamber guests on hand for the ceremonies that each department or "store" functions as an individual unit, with sales projections and goals set according to past performance. Above the individual department managers are assistant managers who report to the store manager.

Displaying a men's jogging suit manufactured by the same U.S. manufacturer who supplies professional football teams, Mr. Walton explained the company's policy of buying and selling American-made goods. Some of its merchandise comes through wholly-owned subsidiary companies serving special divisions such as jewelry and shoes.

Mr. Walton stressed that buying American keeps Americans working. He also noted the company's policy of "rolling back" prices on items when the manufacturer's price to them goes down. "Instead of keeping the same price or even raising the price, we lower the cost to the consumer," he explained. "We've been able to do things like this because our expenses are low, our employees' attitude and sales volume."

Mr. Skelton attributed the company's success to its pledge to customer satisfaction and "treating people right."

In welcoming Mr. Walton to Nacogdoches, Chamber of Commerce President Dr. Janelle Ashley noted "we appreciate your additional investment in Nacogdoches."

"Hardly a day goes by that you don't read something in the financial media about Wal-Mart," Dr. Ashley said. "It is one of the finest organizations in America and is an example of what has made America great."

The remodeling was completed less than a week ago, Mr. Coleman said. The new space allowed for the addition of several new lines and departments of merchandise, he said. Also added as a customer convenience was a snack bar.

In addition to Nacogdoches, Wal-Mart stores were having grand openings in Livingston and in Mississippi this morning.

Dots and dashes

By Victor B. Fain

INVITED: Christmas lighting ceremony sponsored by the Residence Hall Association on the SFASU campus will be a community happening tonight.

The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. in front of the Austin Building, featuring Dr. William R. Johnson, university president; the university's Pep Band; and Santa Claus.

Lights will be turned on at the Austin Building, and then the happening will move among the residence halls for the illumination of lights.

Kim Smajstrla, president, and Catherine Perkins, vice president, for the RA, have invited

Economy

Moderate gain during October

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government's main gauge of future economic activity rose a moderate 0.6 percent in October, the biggest increase in three months, but a gain influenced by special factors.

The Commerce Department said the improvement in its Index of Leading Indicators followed a lackluster 0.2 percent September increase and a 0.2 percent decline in August.

The August drop was the fourth this year, emphasizing the generally sluggish performance of this collection of forward-pointing economic statistics all year long. In fact, the index has risen just 1.2 percent from April through October, compared to a rise of 3.9 percent for the preceeding six months.

Analysts said even the 0.6 percent September increase was not as strong as it appeared because half of the advance came from a pick-up in raw materials prices.

The raw materials that increased were recycled paper, aluminum and raw cotton. The leading index considers price increases for raw materials a sign of increasing demand and thus a signal of faster growth in the future.

But analysts said rising prices for raw materials can also be a signal of rising inflation and thus a negative force on economic growth.

The Reagan administration has been predicting that economic growth will strengthen substantially in coming months from the generally sluggish performance of the past two years.

This view is discounted by private economists who, while not forecasting a recession, do not believe the economy is about to perform much better than it has since mid-1984. Growth since then, as measured by the gross national product, has averaged 2.4 percent annually.

"The economy is pretty flat. It has been going essentially sideways for two years and I think it is going to go sideways at least through the first half of next year as well," said David Wyss, an economist for Data Resources Inc. of Lexington, Mass., a private forecasting firm.

Long distance rates are cut

AUSTIN (AP) — AT&T Communications has cut its long-distance rates within Texas by 10 percent in line with a new rate structure approved last week by the Public Utility Commission, company officials said.

Disposal of 2 road barns is approved

Nacogdoches County commissioners authorized the county road administrator to dispose of the Cushing and Chireno county barns Monday morning when the court met in special session.

The county had advertised for bids for the purchase of the barns, however, the court did not receive any bids.

The court authorized the county auditor to advertise for the position of courthouse custodian. The position will become vacant Dec. 31, and the new custodian will be employed on Jan. 1.

A clarification of title of the